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ABSTRACT

The test for today's economy is to create a workforce development system that capitalizes on current opportunities across states, regions, and local communities. The economic environment is positive, with tight, dynamic, and global labor markets. The business need for job-ready, entry-level workers; high-skilled workers; and workers who can continue to learn fuels a commitment to workforce development. One approach is business-led, regional workforce development coalitions. Changing patterns for finding work and advancing in careers have created incentives for new approaches to improving local labor markets in which job seekers have identifiable routes for employment access and advancement, and employers can find qualified workers effectively and efficiently. Workforce development is emerging as the central strategy for creating new opportunities for companies and individuals and a key factor in regional economic development activity. Business-led workforce coalitions are surfacing as viable mechanisms for developing effective regional workforce development systems. They are as diverse as the issues on which they focus: geography, industries, individuals/groups, economic development, labor market dynamics, and education reform. Three broad activity areas are policy and advocacy, planning and research, and technical assistance. Steps to ensure the creation of a successful regional coalition are as follows: join forces, define the problem, design the solution, implement the solution, evaluate effectiveness, and sustain the collaboration. (Contains 14 references) (YLB)

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Business-Led Coalitions: Aligning Supply and Demand in Workforce Development

Workforce Brief #9

National Alliance of Business

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NATIONAL WORKFORCE ASSISTANCE COLLABORATIVE

WORKFORCE BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS

Business-Led Coalitions: Aligning Supply and Demand in Workforce Development

Introduction

Globalization, technology, and shifting demographics have produced an economic environment of accelerating change in which entire industries are being created and destroyed on almost a daily basis. While many companies and individuals have benefitted from the changes that surround us, there are substantial segments of the American workforce for whom these changes have meant professional uncertainty, financial instability, and increased familial stress. The challenge is to ensure that *all* Americans can take advantage of the opportunities in the new economy.

This challenge has direct implications for local workforce development policies and practices. Businesses will only grow and prosper in communities that provide them with an accessible, skilled workforce, capable of competing both nationally and internationally. There is a growing recognition in communities across America that the workforce development infrastructure is a critical component of economic competitiveness. More important is the increasing realization that the traditional supply-side model that invests in education or links individuals to training is no longer adequate. The new economy requires a market-driven approach that aligns business demands, individual opportunity, and educational services.

Creating a workforce development system that is in tune with the new economic environment requires significant transformations in individuals, education and training providers, business, and public policy. There is, at this juncture, a unique opportunity for success. The economic environment is positive, with tight, dynamic, and global labor markets. The business need for job-ready, entry-level workers, workers with high skills, and workers who can continue to learn fuels a commitment to workforce development. Workers who are able to take responsibility for managing their careers have new and unparalleled opportunities. The test is to create a workforce development system that will capitalize on these opportunities across states, regions, and local communities.

This Workforce Brief will explore one approach to meeting this test: business-led, regional workforce development coalitions. This brief examines how:

- ❑ Constant change is creating a new economic environment with fresh labor market dynamics.
- ❑ Workforce development is emerging as the central strategy for creating new opportunities for companies and individuals. It is also becoming a key factor in regional economic development activity.
- ❑ Business-led workforce coalitions are surfacing as viable mechanisms for developing effective regional workforce development systems. These coalitions are as diverse as the issues on which they focus.
- ❑ Successful coalitions require collaboration. There are a number of specific steps to take to ensure the creation of a successful regional coalition.

Changing Labor Market Dynamics

The most significant feature about the global economy of the 1990s is how the combination of globalization, advances in technology, and shifting demographics have radically altered the foundation of the U.S. economy. As a consequence, the criteria for success in the marketplace, the organizational structures and management practices of businesses, and the skills required to secure and sustain employment also are changing. Moreover, change continues at an accelerating pace. Effective organizations undergo constant transformation to fit within their changing environment, while workers must constantly alter their skill sets to meet emerging requirements for successful performance.

As the pace of change has accelerated, the pace of "creative destruction" has quickened as well. Capitalism inevitably tears down even as it builds anew. So it is that the U.S. economy has generated rising incomes and new opportunities while destroying some jobs, and has developed entirely new industries, such as computer hardware and software, while destroying some industries. Between 1979 and 1995, the U.S. economy destroyed 43 million jobs. During the same period, however, the economy created almost 70 million new jobs. These changes are part of a long-term, structural transition; they are a permanent feature of the economy now and into the foreseeable future.

A fresh set of labor market dynamics are associated with the new economic environment. More and more frequently, it is the workforce that enables a company to improve productivity and create value in the marketplace, and serves as the foundation of competitive advantage. A recent study conducted by Lisa Lynch and Sandra Black, for example, showed that a ten percent increase

in the education level of a company's workforce (approximately one year of additional education) increased productivity by 8.6 percent in the manufacturing sector and by 12.9 percent in the non-manufacturing sector. (In contrast, a comparable increase in capital equipment increased productivity by 2.6 percent and 3.6 percent, respectively.)

Skills and Company Competitiveness

In today's global economic environment, companies are placing greater importance on the skills of their workforce as a critical part of their efforts to gain a competitive edge.

- A recent Coopers & Lybrand survey found that the number of companies reporting skill shortages as a barrier to growth has jumped one-third in the last year, from 47 percent in 1996 to 63 percent in 1997.
- The 1998 Olsten Staffing Strategies Survey revealed that nearly 57% of respondents expect to be understaffed in 1998, up from 45% last year, and almost 70% said the major cause of understaffing is lack of qualified applicants.

As knowledge and skills become the core drivers of business success, companies are developing new ways to plan, manage, and deliver these to the workplace. New strategies and tactics are being designed and implemented to capitalize on the creativity, commitment, and effort of employees, while maintaining and preserving the flexibility companies need to adjust the size and skills of their workforce on a continuous basis. These new strategies and tactics are specifically designed for an environment in which the change facing companies shows constantly increasing volume (number of changes), momentum (pace and time to respond), and complexity (interrelatedness of changes).

Previously successful workforce strategies are not suited to the new economic environment: change is too fast and constant. For example, the inflexibility of the internal labor market has been replaced by a greater reliance on external labor markets for new employees. At low skill levels, employers have increased their reliance on part-time and temporary employees. At higher skill levels, employers are hiring more from outside the firm or using project-based contract employees. Similarly, long-term tenure and opportunities for wage and career advancement through internal career ladders have been weakened or eliminated by the flatter job hierarchies resulting from restructuring and increased outsourcing of non-critical functions. While the breadth of job tasks, employee autonomy, and lateral mobility within firms may be growing, upward mobility within firms is increasingly constrained.

Workers can take advantage of significant new opportunities in companies and industries that are undergoing transformation and realignment. Workers seeking new career or occupational paths can escape from dead-end jobs, declining companies, and depressed industries and move into jobs, companies, and industries with significant growth opportunities. Rather than diminishing job security, security can be enhanced as companies and employees constantly reconfigure and reinvent themselves – *if* workers meet the increased skill requirements emerging across all types of occupations. "Winners" will necessarily become more self-reliant, taking the initiative to grow their skills to improve their job value and marketability. They will assume most of the responsibility for managing the effects of workplace change on their lives and careers.

Not all workers have access to the opportunities and rewards of increased skill development. Those with more education and better skills are more likely to work in workplaces where they can further develop their skills and gain even more training on the job. Those with one to three years of post-secondary education are 40 percent more likely – and baccalaureate degree holders are twice as likely – to be retrained on the job.

Just as those with skills get more training, there is reason to believe that those with skills have more career opportunity. More skill is not only necessary to get a job, but to keep one as well. Thus, low-skill workers are the "losers" in the new economy. They are generally unprepared to deal with the changes and, lacking a vision of new career options as well as opportunities for pursuing additional education and training, will be left behind by workplace change – either in low-wage, dead-end jobs, or unemployed.

An effective labor market meets the needs of both job seekers and employers. It provides job seekers with identifiable routes for accessing employment and advancing in a chosen occupation or career, and it enables employers to find *qualified* workers effectively and efficiently. With *effective* job matching, employers are spared the costs of remedial training or frequent employee turnover. With *efficient* job matching, they are spared excessive recruitment costs.

Changing patterns for finding work and advancing in careers have created incentives for new approaches to improving local labor markets. To be effective, these new approaches must meet the needs of all players, providing "win-win" conditions for employers, workers, job seekers, and other local institutions.

Regional Workforce Development

Both corporate and individual success depend on increases in knowledge and skills, increases that can only be met via education and training. This means that the organizations that educate and train current and future workers have a direct and particularly important effect on a firm's competitiveness, a worker's ability to take advantage of labor market opportunities, and a community's economic development prospects.

Corporate, individual, and community prosperity depend upon attaining and maintaining alignment between business skill demands, individuals' opportunities for skill attainment, and the availability of educational services. An aligned, reliable employment and workforce development system would provide business with skilled workers to meet the needs of a changing workplace, help individuals make decisions about their own skill development needs, and enable education and training providers to graduate students whose competencies match the needs of employers. Achieving this alignment is no easy task.

In the past, public employment and training programs viewed *individuals* as their primary customers. As a consequence, they supported and reinforced a supply-driven workforce development system. Program dollars focused on linking students to education and training providers, with little or no attention given to labor demand or employers' needs. This is evidenced by the existing compartmentalization of education and training streams (vocational education, K-12, community college, university) and the frequent focus of education and training on separate population groups (welfare recipients, in-school youth, out of school youth, and dislocated workers). In the new economic environment, instead of the government being the driver of education and training services through broad based training programs, the drivers will be employers.

Dona Ana (New Mexico) Workforce Action Council

The Dona Ana Workforce Action Council (DAWAC) is committed to developing a proactive workforce policy that can be replicated or expanded throughout the region. The Council's mission is to bring together business, government, education, labor and the community to collaborate and to invest in the community's future by linking education and training to the workplace of today and of the future. The goals of DAWAC include:

- ❑ To integrate and improve the education, training and employment delivery systems of Dona Ana County;
- ❑ To ensure that academic and career education programs provide the necessary skills for successful employment and life-long learning;
- ❑ To articulate and implement workforce development policies that support economic development strategies within the region;
- ❑ To promote collaboration between business and the educational and vocational training systems;
- ❑ To serve as a resource to help local businesses stay competitive by identifying workforce training needs and coordinating training resources; and
- ❑ To link workforce preparation programs to economic development strategies.

As businesses become more knowledgeable about the new economy with its global competition, ever tighter margins, and changing skill and labor requirements, they are forming new alliances and partnerships, in fact, whole new relationships, with education providers. Individual companies are establishing strategic partnerships with preferred education and training providers to better address their innovation and workforce needs.

These relationships directly benefit a firm's current and future employees, as well as its strategic partners, but not necessarily those outside of the organization or the general public. Such partnerships determine which education and training providers will serve as the "suppliers" of skilled workers. The challenge facing the public sector is determining what policies and practices are needed to provide disadvantaged, unemployed, and dislocated individuals access to these providers.

In this context, meeting the needs of diverse employers for qualified workers can be a key competitive advantage for a region or community. PHH Fantus Consulting notes that the "trainability" of a region's workforce and the infrastructure to deliver training and education are crucial features of local economic competitiveness and ones that more companies are using to judge workforce quality. A report from the National League of Cities observed, "a community's capacity to provide a continuum of learning opportunities ... may well be the critical determining factor in local economic growth in the years ahead." How communities implement workforce development programs and policies, invest limited resources, and arrange service delivery to continually improve workforce skills will determine whether they are winners or losers in the new economic environment.

Intel

Two years ahead of opening a new plant in Fort Worth, Texas, Intel is laying the groundwork to prepare a substantial pool of job-ready applicants. It convinced a group of high-tech companies, including Texas Instruments, National Semiconductor, and Hitachi, to form a partnership to build a pool of qualified workers from which they all can benefit. The consortia also obtained buy-in from 15 technical and community colleges in the region to support a customized technical program.

Business-Led Workforce Coalitions

Leading companies are doing whatever it takes to get the right people (people with the appropriate knowledge and skills), at the right time, in the right place. While few companies have the resources or inclination to take on the challenge of building a workforce development system alone, many companies have joined together to build effective and efficient local and regional employment and training systems. These workforce coalitions set action-oriented agendas, and take critical and active roles in directing their community's employment and training strategies. They work with educators, government, and other community stakeholders to put the fundamental components of a competitive workforce system in place. These coalitions are viable mechanisms for aligning and coordinating both the supply side and the demand side of workforce development.

In an effort to encourage business leadership in regional, state, and local workforce development coalitions, the National Alliance of Business examined the issues confronting local workforce development coalitions. Some of the more intriguing findings emerging from this research follow.

- ❑ **There are many different types of coalitions.** There is no one best way to organize a business-led coalition; the different approaches taken in individual cases present a range of alternatives. Depending on the community, existing entities (e.g., local chambers of commerce, private industry councils or workforce development boards, regional and local industry organizations) may be at the heart of the coalition, a part of it, or not a player at all.
- ❑ **Coalitions are formed to address some targeted need.** The primary criteria for targeting helps define a coalition's "primacy of purpose." A number of different criteria can be observed:
  - ➤ **Geography.** Regional coalitions, by definition, target specific geographic areas. But the size of the region may vary, and may not correspond to political boundaries. Thus, coalitions may represent broad, multi-state economic regions, states, cities or localities, or even neighborhoods.
  - ➤ **Industries.** Industrial coalitions target industry clusters or promote industry networks and learning consortia to enhance industry and firm competitiveness. The identification of industry clusters and the development of industry networks help channel resources and services to an industry's workforce. Industry associations often exercise leadership in the development of coalitions targeting specific industries.

Kansas, Inc.

Kansas, Inc's mission is to build a strong, diversified economy that promotes new and existing industries. To this end, Kansas, Inc. works to ensure all its residents have the education and skills necessary for meaningful long-term employment. Kansas, Inc.:

- ❑ Creates a positive, competitive business climate that encourages investment and growth.
- ❑ Prepares Kansas youth for the workplace and life-long learning.
- ❑ Provides high quality workforce training and life-long learning opportunities to adults.
- ❑ Maintains and improves public and private infrastructure essential for growth and development.
- ❑ Sustains and enhances economic development capacity.

Some coalitions may adopt a different method of classification in selecting companies to assist, e.g., a coalition may be formed to address the special needs of small and mid-sized companies.

- **Individuals/groups.** Some coalitions may be formed to address the needs of specific individuals or groups in a community. This would include, for example, coalitions formed to address the needs of the disadvantaged, at-risk youth, immigrants, disabled, or dislocated workers. These coalitions recognize that ability of all individuals to participate actively in the labor market enhances the community's economic vitality.
- **Issues.** Issue coalitions are frequently formed to address such issues as economic development, labor market dynamics, and education reform.

Economic development: Economic development programs have traditionally focused on attracting new business to an area, improving infrastructure, and/or providing incentives to businesses to remain in the area, and many coalitions concentrate on these customary services as well. In the new economic environment, however, many coalitions are moving beyond traditional economic development to such issues as transforming current and new businesses into high performance workplaces and developing a skilled workforce. More and more coalitions have emphasized workforce preparation and development as a key piece of any systemic economic development strategy.

Right Place Program

Right Place Program (RPP) is the economic development arm of the Grand Rapids chamber of commerce. Its customer-driven programs have pushed the envelope of community economic development. RPP was started in 1985 as a traditional economic development program. Its main purpose was to attract, retain, and expand businesses in the Grand Rapids Michigan area. Over time, RPP has evolved to offer companies a rich mix of services, including continuous improvement user groups (CIUGs), and organizational development and training. RPP's four major operating objectives are to

- ❑ Function under leadership from the private sector in order to develop optimal relationships.
- ❑ Develop organizations' capacity to use knowledge for improvement and innovation.
- ❑ Develop the workforce's knowledge, behavior, and skills, and
- ❑ Integrate knowledge, services, and relationships to address business' needs.

Labor market dynamics: In the new economic environment, employment relationships are more tenuous, individual mobility is higher, and career ladders are less obvious than in the past. Many coalitions work to create an efficient and equitable regional labor market in tune with these new dynamics. These coalitions endeavor to develop a system that provides individuals with accurate and easily available information about local job openings, opportunities for training, and the skills and experience needed to advance from one job to another. The coalitions also provide employers with accurate information about job seekers and their skills, and training providers and their quality, as well as facilitate effective applicant screening and job matching.

Education reform: Many coalitions are formed to help education and training providers at all levels – K-12, community college, university, and continuing education – better meet the needs of employers. While there isn't a shortage of education and training providers, there may be a shortage of high quality providers, that is, providers responsive to the workforce and workplace needs of employers. Coalitions are working with public school systems to define academic needs in the workplace, and translate these needs into rigorous academic standards and applied curriculum. They are encouraging their business members to ask for school transcripts as a part of the hiring process. Coalitions are also helping schools use the Malcolm Baldridge quality standards to build the capacity for continuous improvement into the public school system.

Leading companies are aggressively adopting new strategies (e.g., electronic performance support systems, computer-based training, web-based training, skill standards) that are the keys to quantum improvements in the cost, speed, and quality of education and training services. But educational institutions are generally behind the curve. Educational systems are still, by and large, working within traditional models (e.g., credit based on seat time, vertical career pathways, long-term career training), while the marketplace is demanding modularized, skill-based approaches. Coalitions work with education and training providers to design and deliver services in tune with the demands of the marketplace.

Maryland Business Roundtable

The Maryland Business Roundtable (MBRT) is a coalition of 80 Maryland businesses working with the governor, the state superintendent of schools, educators, parents, and community members. MBRT has played a vital role in bringing together various stakeholders who talk and listen to each other, abandon turf issues and reach consensus, all in an effort to prepare students for the world of work. MBRT has:

- ❑ Collaborated with Maryland's Department of Education to incorporate skills for success into higher academic standards.
- ❑ Helped conduct focus groups with high school principals, teachers, and parents to discuss higher standards and more stringent graduation requirements.
- ❑ Planned a public engagement campaign to make sure people around the state are aware of the need for more rigorous graduation requirements.
- ❑ Developed a state-wide plan for teacher professional development.
- ❑ Designed a model for school-based decision-making.
- ❑ Developed and helped implement the Maryland Plan for Technology in Education.

MBRT also provides business partners to schools and corporate training to educators.

It is important to recognize that a single coalition may target multiple needs. A coalition may focus on a specific industry within a specific geographic area. Similarly, a coalition serving a particular industry may focus on the economic development of the region.

- ❑ **Coalitions engage in a variety of activities.** The targeting decision discussed above helps focus a coalition. Additional focus emerges from decisions about what type of activities to undertake. Strategically, coalitions need to decide what they will do and what they will not do. Three broad activity areas can be identified: policy and advocacy, planning and research, and technical assistance.

- **Policy and advocacy.** Many coalitions engage in policy and advocacy activities in an effort to bring employment and workforce development policies in line with new economic realities. These coalitions may promote new policies and/or the elimination of existing policies and programs.
- **Planning and research.** Coalitions are often instrumental in developing regional strategic plans for workforce development. Business-led coalitions are particularly effective in convening the multiple constituencies and organizations that must be included in the development of a regional strategic plan. As part of, or independent of this planning effort, coalitions may engage in research to clarify the status of the existing regional workforce development system or to identify best practices in regional workforce development.
- **Technical assistance.** Coalitions may direct workforce development services. A coalition may broker or subcontract services if it does not have the internal capacity to provide technical assistance itself.

These three activity areas are not mutually exclusive. A coalition may engage in more than one of these activities simultaneously or sequentially. Most coalitions, however, have a single, demonstrated competency or preferred activity area; as a consequence, few coalitions can meet all the needs of the entire community.

- **A region can have multiple coalitions.** An effective workforce development system must meet the needs of multiple constituencies. This is a difficult challenge. Private sector companies have found that alliances and partnerships with other firms, even competitors, are wise strategic choices in today's competitive environment. This same lesson applies to coalitions: alliances and partnerships are a good way to address a community's workforce development needs.

Some communities have developed collaborative models where a variety of employer-led groups leverage their individual expertise. These coalitions must align and coordinate their efforts in order to build an effective workforce development system. While there is no preordained outcome of what this partnership will look like, it must occur if there is to be a comprehensive workforce development system.

- **Coalitions have some common needs.** The nature of a coalition's activity will be determined by the character of the region or community in which it is located (e.g., economic conditions, business mix, workforce skills, education and training providers, non-profit organizations). Despite their unique situations, coalitions have some common needs. The three highest priority issues for workforce coalitions throughout the country, both at present and in the future, are: 1) coordinating workforce and economic development, 2) easing the school-to-work transition, and 3) addressing skilled worker shortages. Employee turnover in local firms and unskilled worker shortages are likely to emerge as high priority issues in the future. Other priority issues include work-based learning, performance-based funding, skill standards, one-stop centers, and curriculum development.
- **Coalitions need information.** For coalitions to succeed, they need information on best practices (i.e., what has worked for other coalitions), as well as specific strategies appropriate for different economic and labor market conditions. Coalition leaders agree that benchmarking best practices is the activity or service that would be of most value to them in addressing their workforce development challenges. Other information workforce coalitions want includes skill standards data and information, labor market data by region, and updated lists of industry/occupation associations that have developed skill standards for entry level workers.

The Greater Cleveland Growth Association

The Greater Cleveland Growth Association launched its Jobs and Workforce Initiative (JWFI) to help build a world-class regional labor force in northeast Ohio that meets current and future employer needs, supports economic growth, and broadens work opportunities for all area residents. The JWFI has chosen to focus initially on recommendations that address the most pressing of the region's fundamental problems. These recommendations are grouped into six areas:

- Creating a regional system of one-stop job linkage centers,
- Establishing a permanent regional workforce forum,
- Supporting educational improvement efforts,
- Replicating the Center for Employment Training model,
- Developing better systems for financing workforce development, and
- Ensuring that training and workforce preparation efforts are monitored, evaluated, adaptable, and accountable.

Steps to Success

Building a workforce development coalition is a collaborative process. The true value of collaboration has to do with creating different relationships, shaping different program areas, and drawing different conclusions from the same circumstances. Collaboration, in essence, is about thinking and acting differently.

While business leaders agree with the coalition approach, effective implementation is difficult. Many nascent coalitions either lack sufficient capacity or the time to pursue a structured community partnership. Successful efforts depend upon such basic building blocks as trust, shared vision, and the commitment to make it work. They also attend to the *mechanics* of how to structure a collaborative process, such as whom to invite, and what the agenda will be, etc.

Knowing the elements common to effective collaborations can help other business, education, and community leaders in their efforts to build a workforce development coalition. These common elements are:

- **Join Forces.** Collaboration begins when someone or some group decides to act. At that point, there are two things that must happen for collaboration to proceed: the right people must become involved and all participants must commit to collective effort. Partnerships achieve their maximum potential when the right mix of people from many organizations is involved. When recruiting members, it is best to look for people who will bring clout, commitment, and diversity to the table. Selecting the right people provides a core leadership team with credibility and legitimacy in the community.
- **Define the Problem.** Once the partners have committed to work together, they must define the problem they want to address. Conducting a community assessment establishes a base of common knowledge, which enables the collaboration to focus a common issue. Analysis of the assessment data to find mismatches

between skill needs and skills available, inadequacies in education and training services, and problems in the operation of the labor market provides the coalition with a foundation for defining a shared vision. Once established, the vision must be communicated widely within the community.

✔ **Design the Solution.** A vision and problem analysis serve as the foundation for the development of a strategic plan. A good plan is at the heart of a successful collaboration. The plan's goals should be realistic and sensitive to all partners' individual objectives in order to produce a genuine understanding among partners. An effective, long-range strategic plan concentrates the resources available to the coalition on mutually determined, measurable outcomes. It provides the various partners in the coalition with a clear mission to guide their own initiatives and activities.

✔ **Implement the Solution.** The purpose of planning is to produce results, not plans. Effective implementation – action – is the key to producing results. Successful implementation requires that all partners, individually or together as part of the coalition,

- Commit to active participation and involvement during implementation,
- Provide sufficient resources (financial, human, and other) to follow through on the vision and operating plan,
- Agree to organizational structures and mechanisms to coordinate implementation and maintain good communications among all parties,
- Establish mechanisms to monitor implementation, evaluate progress, and revise the plan, as needed, to meet objectives, and
- Recognize and celebrate achievement of partnership objectives.

✔ **Evaluate Effectiveness.** Every collaborative needs a way to determine progress and success. An effective evaluation system assesses individual programs or tactics in the strategic plan, the partnership strategy itself, and overall community improvement. Evaluation results provide coalitions with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and make needed revisions in their programs. An evaluation can be simple when the evaluation goals are clear and when the planning and execution rely as much as possible on the input of stakeholders and existing data sources.

✔ **Sustain the Collaboration.** Collaboratives need to be cultivated and maintained. Time and effort should be devoted to preparing for the inevitable changes that will result over the life of a partnership. Specific strategies should be developed to build the management capacities necessary to sustain the effort, particularly through leadership transitions.

As business performance has become increasingly interconnected with education and training policies, new program delivery models that defy categorization as "public" or "private" have emerged. Business-led, regional workforce coalitions exemplify these new models. These coalitions are concerned about the quality and competence of the American workforce, and have developed effective strategies for addressing their concerns. Through collective action, they connect jobseekers with training, resources, and employers – and meet employers' needs at the same time. The new partnership models and more flexible, creative solutions being invented by business-led workforce coalitions can help achieve an aligned, reliable employment and workforce development system.

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